ISSN 1059-1249

THE MAGIC LANTERN GAZETTE

Magic Lantern Society of United States and Canada

Volume 9
Number 1

Spring 1997

PRESIDENTS' DAY

By Robert O. Bishop

There seems never to have been a time in these United States when leading political figures have not been subject to ridicule, caricature, and lampoonery. The higher the profile, the more this statement has been true.

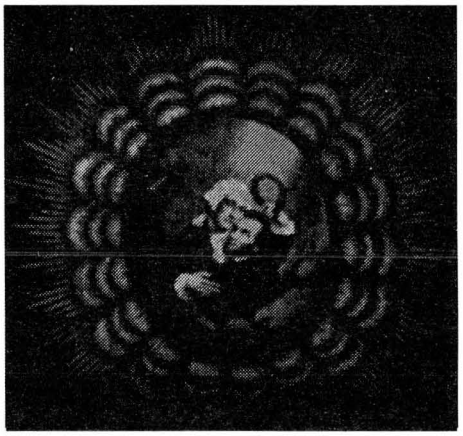
Presidents' Day recently passed. Our first president was often shown in magic lantern shows crossing the Delaware in heroic fashion and stance (as one member has written, "In one direction or another.").

The Father of our Country often had his image used for commercial profit by the business world. Lincoln was often reviled in his own time. He was described as a monkey, among other unsavory terms. But following his assassination and the passing of time, his image and personal qualities of character were used by the same commercial world, in the same manner, and for the same reasons as Washington's.

This year preceding and following Presidents' Day one was hard pressed not to find their combined images being used by commerce in any newspaper, radio station, or television outlet in the entire country.

In the world of the magic lantern, Washington and Lincoln dissolving chromotropes were often the mainstay of post Civil War magic lantern shows. Abe Lincoln was depicted as the "Railsplitter" and then later as our martyred president.

My favorite Lincoln/Washington slide was issued by McAllister Optician, 627 Broadway, New York. The title on Civil War Slide #919



describes the image thusly, "An Allergoric Representation of the Meeting of Washington and Lincoln." The three inch glass is mounted in a four-by-six mahogany carrier, common to the time. There is a stationary chromotropic effect surrounding the inner image of Washington embracing Lincoln and placing a laurel wreath upon his head (see illustration).

One of my most successful adaptations of such a slide as described above depicts the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, behind Lincoln and his wife Mary Todd in the Presidential balcony box at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. I contrived a slip action blackout, which conceals Booth and his thrusting gun arm. When the narration reaches this point the slip is pulled revealing Booth as he fires his gun. A block of wood is slammed down on the projection table. The action of the slide and the sudden explosion of sound shocks the audience. I guess I am also guilty of using the Lincoln images for my own purposes.

If you have not submitted your dues for 1996, please do so now to:

Ralph Shape
18611 48th Place S.
Seattle, WA 98188

$20.00 - Regular Member
$25.00 - Institutional Member
$25.00 - Commercial Member

INSIDE

- The Nickelodeon Steropticon
- Auction Results 1996
- My Limelight Was A Lemon Part Two
- Damer's Research
- John Ripley
- Kemp Niver

ONCE IN A WHILE YOU GET LUCKY

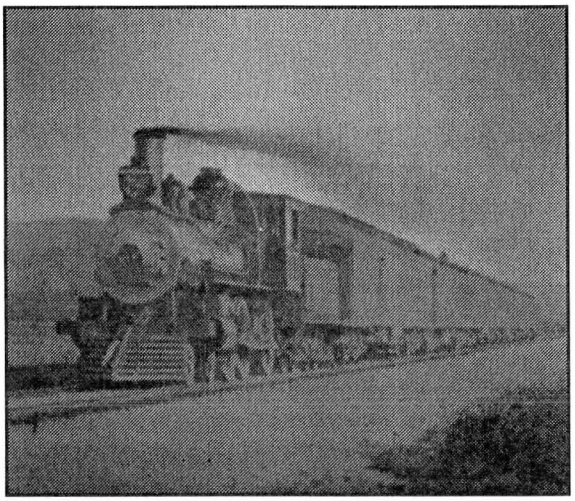
By Dick Wheeler

It all started with the lantern slides we used to illustrate geography when I was a little boy in grade school in the early 1920s. The transparent photographic images on the glass plates held a special fascination for me. The projectors were huge, I thought, and being able to project the images on a screen larger than life increased the interest.

About that time I attended occasional lectures of the Chautaugua Society when they came to town. The slides often were in color. This beginning instilled in me a lifelong interest and pleasure with all things that I could project on a screen. I never saw any of those glass slides for sale, probably because I didn't go to the right places.

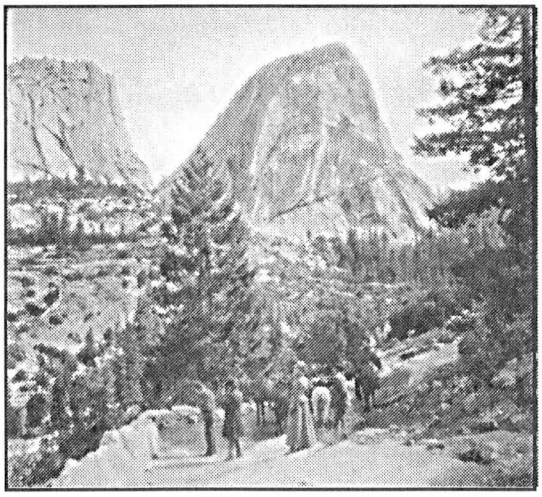
Those slides were always in the back of my mind though, as through the years I concentrated on movies. I took 35mm slides, but somehow they were not the same. When 35mm photography came into being it killed lantern slides by amateur photographers and the glass slides were used commercially for theatre, training programs, etc.

Once in a while in the 1950s I would see a toy projector, but few strip slides for them. I liked old images, pictures and early silent movies, but I never saw more than one or two unrelated slides. Lanterns, when available, were very expensive and no slides were included so my interest remained latent. Then, in 1962 I went to a local second hand shop and there was a big metal box with a #169 in yellow on the side and inside was a lantern slide projector from the 1930s. I knew at once it was from a recent sale the Los Angeles schools had had of their audio visual equipment, which was to be replaced with newer, up-to-date equipment. My interest peaked to a near explosion as I thought of those slides of long ago. Even though there were no slides included, the price was so low I couldn't get my money out fast enough.



Driving home I thought about what I would like to have in the way of slides, and since I am a railroad fan I hoped I could find railroad slides, the older the better, but I hadn't a clue as to where to start looking. I didn't see them in antique shops and swap meets so the prospects seemed very dim. I asked among my friends and someone volunteered there had been a collection for sale in a bookstore in Pasadena. I wasted no time in inquiring. No, it hadn't sold, and I received the name of the agent who was selling it for a client. The client proved to be the widow of the last owner of a business which had manufactured lantern slides. The first owner of the business had emigrated to the United States from England. His name was F.H. Maude and he brought the nucleus of the collection with him about 1890. Mr. Maude died in the late 1920s. His assistant, a Mr. Robinson, continued to operate the business until his own death in the late 1940s.

The agent agreed to sell me any railroad slides he could find on his visits to see Mrs. Robinson. He brought me a few. I learned in



The Gazette
Copyright 1997
A publication produced by the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada.

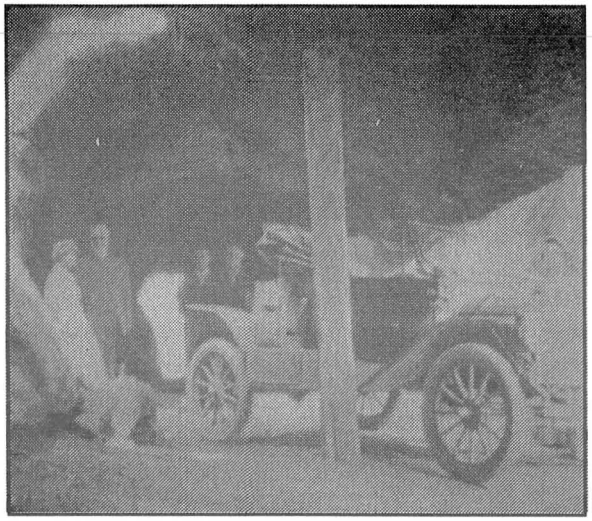
Correspondence should be addressed to:

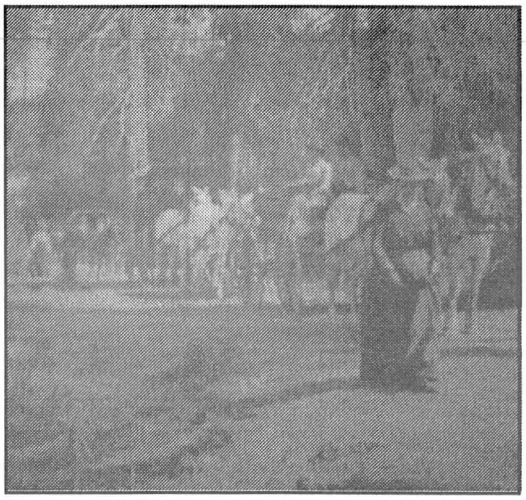
Bob and Sue Hall
3321 114th Street
Gig Harbor, WA 98332
Hm: 206-851-8566

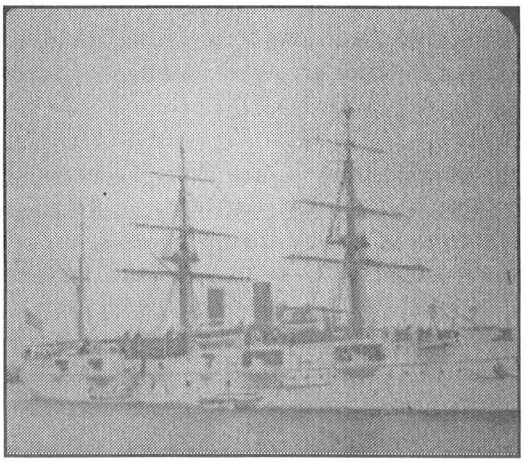
Officers

President:	Bob Hall
Vice President	Homer Peabody
Secretary/Treasurer	Ralph Shape

Membership
One Years Dues
Regular member $20
Institutional Member $25
Commercial Member $25



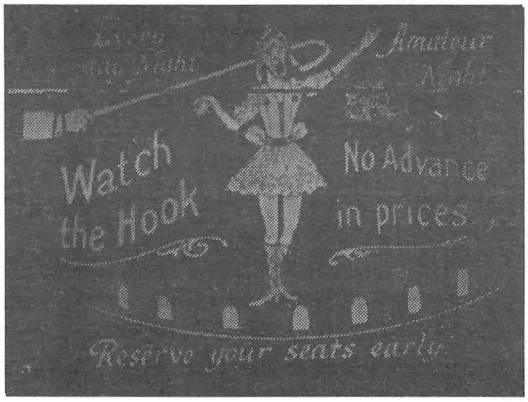




time that the collection at its peak numbered 80,000 slides. Mr. Robinson rented slides to lecturers to illustrate their talks. The agent had sold all he could before I found him and these were the dregs. There were no local views and everything was turn of the century, worldwide. While I was buying slides, Mrs. Robinson moved. The slides had become a burden space-wise. One day he took me to see the collection, and mentioned that Mrs. Robinson needed the space suggesting I make an offer. I did, at so low a figure I was almost ashamed, but it was accepted if I would pay the agent's commission, and I did.

ing lantern slides was positively nil around Los Angeles. After several years I found a buyer from Virginia City who would buy the foreign slides. He came with an old pickup truck and insisted on packing the slides on edge in the bed of his truck. He wouldn't listen and left all the boxes with me. I often wonder how many slides arrived unbroken.

Now I had about 7,000 slides which I could handle space-wise. I made more modern cabinets in natural wood finish. Over the years I learned much from the slides about the commercial slide business, printed a few slides and colored them too. I put together two sets of antique



When I bought the collection it took up the garage and a small house in Robinson's backyard. The slides were in cabinets and slide boxes. I found I also had a large quantity of glass negatives used in printing slides. There was a coloring desk and all the equipment, including coloring paints for tinting slides. There were many boxes as well as cabinets with many drawers. At this point I was overwhelmed, but luckily had storage space at my place of business.

In time I found someone who bought the negatives to start a photo reference business at a good profit over what I had paid. Now I had 23,000 slides, most of which were colored. I eventually sorted them into two groups, Americana and foreign. The climate for sell-

travelogs. My original wish was fulfilled. There are at least 500 to 600 good railroad slides. Using these slides as a basis, I can travel across the United States with many side trips to give shows of various lengths. There are advertising and "Ladies, please remove hats" slides as well as many sets. The 1898 Alaska Gold Rush, temperance, religious slides, and a few song slides are among these sets.

I have given shows, but find I am too busy to actively solicit show dates. I have traveled to many of the places which my slides picture, and it is interesting to see what changes time has wrought.

There are quite a few duplicates here and there which I would be glad to trade. Until I learned of the Magic Lantern Society I had been alone, as if on another planet, and although I enjoyed the slides I have been inactive, but hope someday we may have an active group in Los Angeles as in the northwest.

May your shows all be sellouts and new finds come often.

Editorial note:

Joe Koch recounts that when he corresponded with prospective members about forming a society, one person was delighted because in his words, "This is a lonely hobby." Thanks to our members, especially those who contribute to this newsletter, that need no longer be true.

THE NICKELODEON STEREOPTICON

By J.P. Jenks

It can be argued that the magic lantern was the grandfather of the motion picture machine, since before the advent of the kinetoscope, Magic Lanternists employed numerous techniques including dissolving views, mechanical slides, and panoramic views, to simulate motion. But to say that the magic lantern gave birth to the motion picture would be to claim that the bicycle gave birth to the motor car, and hardly anyone would be willing to argue such a point. What is interesting is that the two technologies greatly overlapped until the photoplay discovered its voice.

What is not commonly recognized is that during the explosion of storefront nickel theatres, roughly 1904 to 1912 in the mid-west, what "packed them in" was not the film—often identified as so many feet of the latest comedy/drama—but the illustrated song, where typically a pair of magic lanterns, or a stereopticon, was used to display beautifully colored glass slides corresponding to the text for each line, while a singer or singers gave voice with the accompaniment of a three-to-five piece "orchestra."

Having researched the period carefully through old newspaper reports on microfilm, it is interesting to see how many of the old advertisements featured the illustrated song as the main attraction, while the "film" was only mentioned in passing. Sometimes only the name of the machine was given, as though it didn't matter what the film was about. Sometimes the bill would include a live "novelty" act, as well, but the main feature was more often the illustrated song.

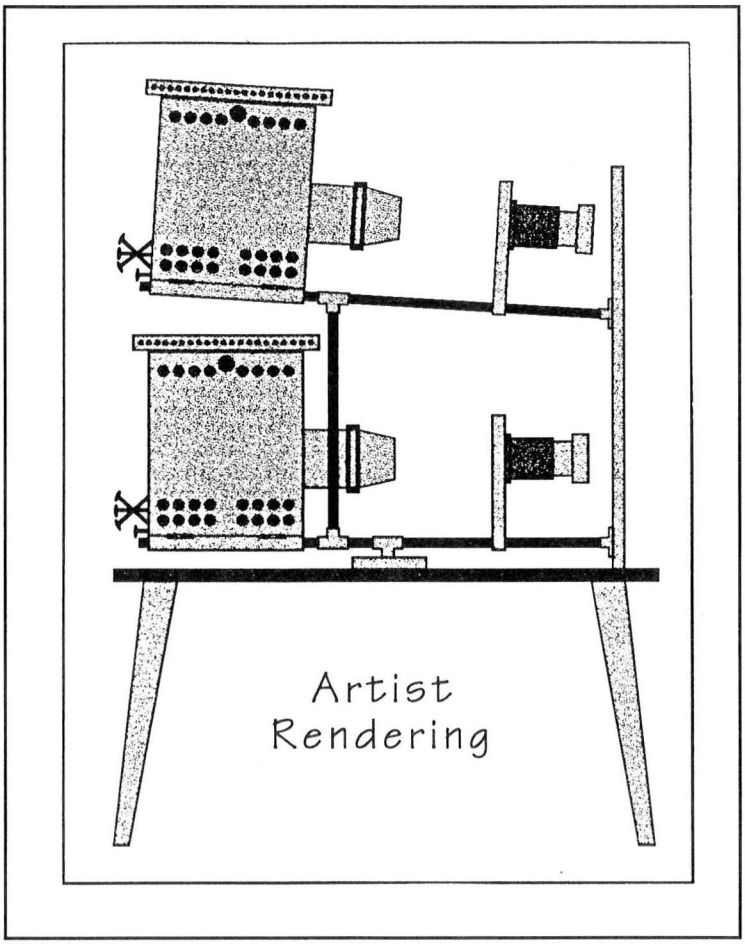
Closer to 1910 the emphasis began to change. The moving pictures became more important, thus more likely to be identified by title and description. The illustrated songs were still a drawing card, but began to move down the bill. By 1912 they were still an important feature, but continuing to lose ground. The film had become the important feature.

Some have argued that there never was such a thing as a commercial grade stereopticon designed for the early nickel theatres since from the earliest days all motion picture devices included the capability for displaying glass slides. But from my own collection of early motion picture devices, it is obvious that the ability to display glass slides was limited to such examples as, "One moment please, while the operator changes the reel." The capability was there, but for exceptions, and not for an entire show. A quality performance could hardly have been given depending solely on the "just in case" capability of the motion picture machine's accessory.

Not much has survived photographically from the nickel threatre projection booth to clarify the point but from the few that have, there was always more than one projection device—one with a single large lamp house and the other with a pair of not-quite-so-large lamp houses mounted one over the other. The larger house obviously belonged to the motion picture machine, the paired houses belonged to the stereopticon. While it may not be the case that a stereopticon was made specifically for use in store-front theatres, clearly such a device was considered to be as necessary as the motion picture machine, and not a mere accessory.

It would be interesting to be able to document what sorts of devices were used for the display of illustrated song slides in the early storefront nickel theatres. I have yet to find a picture that shows more than just a view from the back, or a side view with the detail mostly occluded by the larger motion picture machine. From the size of their lamp houses alone, they were much larger than the "lodge" sized units more commonly to have survived.

In a picture from 1912 an operator standing next to the device gives one a rough comparison for purposes of scale. Each lamp house appears to have been about 15 inches high. Also, the upper house seems to have been raked at a steeper angle than the lower, allowing for a fairly long "throw." Both had flat tops with vent holes around the perimeter.



The rendering shown here is based on what could be seen in the photograph, then extrapolating to complete the occluded detail. Obviously, each lamp house would have had an associated objective, and some mechanism in front for the required dissolve from one device to the other.

THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW

By Bob Hall

Now that Sue and I are retired, we have managed to steal a little time to start going through some of the slides we have acquired, but which we have never seen. We love looking at these images because they bring the people who lived, and the events that occurred 100 plus years ago to the present as alive and as immediate as they were then. We are constantly amazed at the sharpness and clarity that these images still have after all these years.

When deciding what to write in the president's column for this issue, I thought about all of us who collect these images and the pleasure they bring us through appreciation of the images themselves, the history they bring alive, the depiction of specific areas of interest, the preservation of the image of an object or activity that no longer exists, the examples of a technology that has been lost, or for a myriad of other reasons.

What will the collectors of historic imagery be able to acquire 100 plus years from now? It seems paper photos are more susceptible to fading than glass images. Will film slides remain well-defined and clear? Will video tape deteriorate? Will CD Roms keep their magnetic messages? And if these last two image sources are available, will the technology be there to bring the images to life?

We are blessed. Slides do survive and we have the means to make them larger than life. Collecting a record of the past is still relatively easy to do. That pleasure may not be readily available to future generations.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

As a result of an inquiry we received about a slide of Mt. Lowe, California, we now have a new member. Although new to our area of collecting he has already learned that photographic slides are an excellent source of history.

Dear Robert,

Thanks for getting back to me so soon. I really do not know much about Magic Lantern slides but am interested in finding out what I can. I've collected postcards and a few stereoscopic cards for a few years and love vintage photos.

A few years back I bought a Magic Lantern slide dating to the Civil War. The scene was hand painted and was of Professor Lowe's balloon ascension. It is one of my favorite pieces. Recently I went to the L.A. Image show which I really enjoyed but I was not able to learn much about Magic Lanterns. Perhaps you can recommend some good reading material.

Thaddeus Lowe was an amazing man. During the Civil War he started the Air Force so to speak with his Balloon Corps. He reported Confederate troop movements from the air to Union generals. He was the first to launch an airborne vehicle (balloon) from a ship. It was sort of the first aircraft carrier. He held many patents on gas and refrigeration.

Around 1891 he had a scheme to build a mountain railroad above Pasadena which came together in 1893. It had an incline that rose at a 62% grade. He built a series of hotels, a zoo, observatory, and other spots of interest on the mountain soon named after him, Mt. Lowe. Until the 1930s this was the Disneyland of Southern California.

I am interested in anything related to Thaddeus Lowe or the Scenic Mt. Lowe Railroad. I am also interested in early scenes around Los Angeles, especially the San Gabriel Mountains. I have friends that are interested in mining, diving, and Henry Ford.

I am enclosing a copy of a newsletter I put out and a postcard of Mt. Lowe.

Thanks for your help!
Jake Brouwer

Here is an article from one of the ***"Echo Mountain Echoes,"*** *edited by Jake that tells some of the history of Mt. Lowe. If you have had an Echo Mountain experience in your past or have some of the material he is seeking, please write to him at P.O. Box 1352, Glendora, CA 91740.*

LOOKING BACK AT MOUNT LOWE'S SEARCHLIGHT

Thaddeus Sobieski Constantine Lowe pretty much got what he wanted when he had the money. Ferris wheels were a big attraction of the day and if he had wanted a Ferris wheel he would have it and don't you forget it. But Thad had something much better and that was Mt. Lowe.

California's largest tourist attraction of the day was his. An incline railroad, hotels, and an observatory were all under his command.

Professor Lowe as he was affectionately known, first saw his next mountain top attraction in Chicago at The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. He and George Wharton James went to the Exposition on the shores of Lake Michigan to stimulate bond sales.

In this "White City—The City of Aladdin's Palaces" as it was called, the professor witnessed the newest and most magical wonders the world had to offer. Among them was an item Thaddeus had to own. It was a giant searchlight the likes of which the world had not seen before.

continued page 6

Looking Back at Mount Lowe's Searchlight continued

The searchlight was built by General Electric to rival the German made Schuckert searchlight. The total weight of the searchlight was 6.000 pounds. The lamp itself was five feet in diameter and weighed in at 400 pounds. The reflector which was furnished and polished by Alvan Clark weighed 700 pounds. This wonderful piece of modern technology danced beams of light across the skies of the great Exposition until it was packed up and sent to California. It's first stop was at the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco and then it was boxed up and shipped to Mt. Lowe.

The great searchlight arrived in Pasadena August 6, 1894 and was eventually to be perched atop Mt. Lowe at 6,000 feet above sea level where it would be the highest light of its size in the world. By the 15th the light was on Echo Mt., at the Professors own "White City." It's temporary home was to be a platform just below the powerhouse.

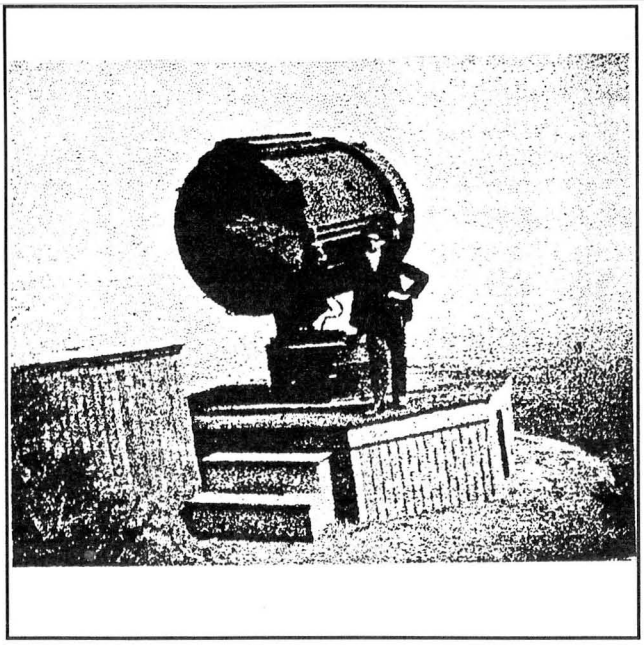
There the 3,000,000 candlepower searchlight would be able to dance it's powerful beam across the width and breadth of the great city below.

The construction and wiring took weeks to finish. The great lamp would require a 50 horsepower engine to operate its powerful rays. Electricity was furnished by a Pelton Water wheel which was placed in Rubio Canyon. This water wheel also provided electricity for the hotels and auxiliary power for the Incline.

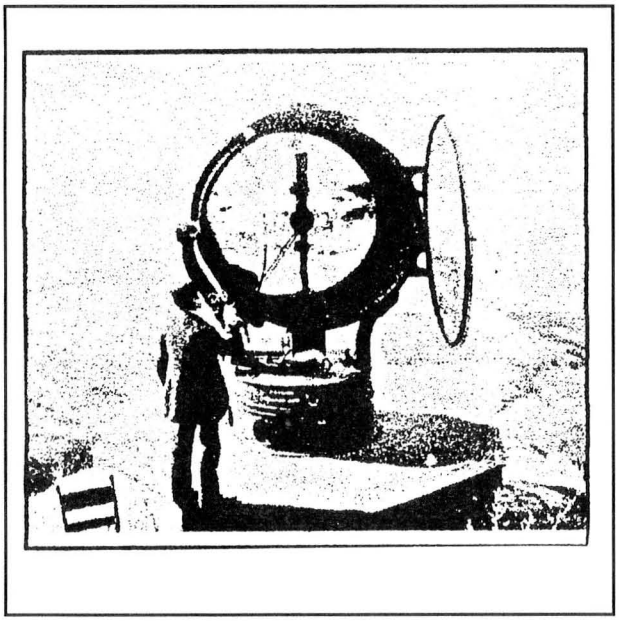
Finally on September 10, 1894 the great searchlight was tried for the first time. The great rays of the proclaimed world's largest searchlight beamed across the rooftops and into the yards of nearly every home in its view.

Word has it that a person could read a newspaper on Catalina Island with just the illumination of the searchlight. The light bounced from the island readers to the ocean waves spying out ships at sea.

Some people marveled at its beauty and others cursed it. Local Pasadena boys had to quickly find new hugging spots as the spotlight invaded their romantic interludes.



Picture in your own mind the state of the world in 1894, peaceful evening at home perhaps reading a book of the day when suddenly a great beam of light burst into your home to scare you and your pets half to death. On the other hand its rays reflected every color of the rainbow upon the clouds above our city providing a spectacular light show that today's concert promoters would be envious of.



By the 15th of September it was a known fact that if you wanted to attract the attention of the great searchlight all you had to do was start a signal fire. It was recommended that you use red or some colored burning fire as the many brush fires in the valley made it hard to tell the signal fires. Once the attendant at the searchlight spotted such a signal fire he would whip the perfectly balanced searchlights base in the direction of the fire to the delight of its owner.

I think that even in 1996 the sight of a great searchlight on Echo Mountain or Mount Lowe would be a wonderful thing to behold. I understand that some of the original parts of the light have recently been found.

RESULTS OF THE GRAND AUCTION

OF THE MAGIC LANTERN SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

JUNE 30, 1996

It is most helpful for members to know current auction prices when buying and selling in the market place. Thanks to Larry Rakow for this list.

No. Item Descriptiion - Sold For

1. Delineascope - $5
2. Toy Zoetrope (2 @ $8) - $16
3. Film strip projector - $30
4. 12 B&W story slides "Little Prince" - $6
5. Magic lantern etching - $40
6. Wood slide box - with key for 27 slides - $25
7. Wood slide box - holds 50 slides - $40
8. Sammeln Magazine - $11, $12, $12
9. 2 Books - "Guleesh", "Drakes Tail" - $16
10. Athanasius Kircher - book - $45
11. Book - "Alice in Wonderland" - $28
12. Single wood slip slide - "Flautist" - $90
13. Single slip slide - "Riddle" - $70
14. Chromatrope - $400
15. Single slip slide "Serenade" - $50
16. Gear and ratchet slide "Ship at Sea" - $45
17. Lantern - Hughes - $125
18. 40 B&W Slides w/Reading-French History - $5
19. 5 slides B&W "Gambler's Career" - $25
20. 8 tinted slides "Swanee River" (Beale) - $55
21. 6 B&W slides "Drunkard's Daughter" - $65
22. 2 wood mounted slides "Brooklyn Bridge/Soldiers" - $55
23. "Star Spangled History" Beale book - $30
24. 10 hand painted slides with carrier - $25
25. 12 colored slides "The Sepoy Mutiny" - $35
26. California souvenir playing cards - circa 1930 - $18
27. 8 slides "Our Colonies Canada" with box & reading - $40
28. 2 sets of 12 slides "Jack and the Beanstalk" & "Baker and Tarred Fence" - $90
29. McIntosh Biunnial Lantern - $350
30. Five Oddfellows - woodmounted (didn't meet reserve)
31. Beard eclipse self-centering slide carrier - $50
32. The Prophet in Rome: 10 B&W slides - $5
33. McIntosh Lantern with illuminant - $45
34. "Broken-Hearted Sue": 2 different sets, ea. with 24 slides (2 @ $65) - $130
35. 11 Patriotic song slides - didn't meet reserve
36. PB Viewmaster - $60
37. 5 advertising slides - $35
38. 4 advertising slides - $85
39. "The Royal Family" - $30
40. "Three's a Crowd" - 3 tinted slides $10
41. Cinamatograph: Ernst Plank - $125
42. Five round toy slides - $50
43. 7 toy lantern slides - $9
44. 15 toy lantern slides - $28
45. 31 toy lantern slides - $35

ADDITIONAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMS AT THE SAN DIEGO 1996 CONVENTION

By Ralph Shape

Scientific Phenomena

Doc Damar Waddington, traveled all the way from Jersey (not New Joisy but the Channel Island of Jersey) to show us how scientific experiments can be demonstrated using a magic lantern. Ably assisted by wife, Joan, and using an exotic array of supplies which included a head of red cabbage, vinegar, ammonia, and a herd of daphnia, Doc Waddington produced an amazing array of experiments. We saw polarization, slide use of a prism, and the checking of the accuracy of diffraction gratings. Electrical demonstrations included an electromagnet slide, a galvanometer slide, and he was able to produce oxygen and hydrogen in a tank slide.

Another demonstration showed a thermometer circuit with a liquid crystal display. Using a heat filter between the lantern's lamp and the condenser he could show that the temperature of the slide rose slowly, proof that heat filters in your lantern would help preserve slides. Also demonstrated was electric current production, the effects of alkaline and acid on red cabbage and the mating habits of daphnia. (If your dictionary doesn't contain this word, they are water fleas; Homer had to send to Los Angeles to get these as none could be found in San Diego). One of the highlights of Damar's presentation was growing crystals. It was amazing to watch them grow on the screen and one can imagine how important a magic lantern was in schools for demonstrating these scientific phenomena's. Damar's ability to show us these experiments on the screen is preserving an important part of the magic lantern history.

The remains of red cabbage was shipped to Damar by boat. Hopefully, it arrived in Jersey in reasonable condition. The Daphnia have multiplied and now number in the gazillions and have taken over San Diego.

Auction continued

46. Wooden lantern slide box with key for 100 slides - $80
47. Wooden lantern slide box for 50 slides - $30
48. 56 colored flowers plus box - $25
49. 6 colored slides "Old Kentucky Home (Beale) - $250
50. Christmas - 3 woodmounted slides - $18
51. Woodmounted "Good Night" slide - $55
52. 5 woodmounted slides - Damon and Pythias, 2 by Beale - $45
53. Woodmounted tinted slide of Teddy Roosevelt - $20
54. Woodmounted snowball fight - $30
55. 4 woodmounted slides "Star Spangled Banner" with words - $70
56. 2 woodmounted patriotic slides - 1 by Beale - $45
57. Lantern slide scrapbook - $20
58. Slip slide "Look Before You Leap" - $50
59. Slip slide "The Wizard" - $80
60. Woodmounted Brady's Gallery - $40
61. Woodmounted Ansco advertising - $55
62. Single slip slide: "Tiger" - $120
63. Single slip slide: "Bat" - $80
64. Single slip slide: "Boy on Donkey" - $35
65. Felix toy zoetrope (3 @ 16) - $48
66. Book - "To Catch a Sunbeam" - $20
67. Book: "The Magician and the Cinema" - $25
68. Book: "San Antonio Was" - $15
69. Family Temperance Pledge: poster - $15
70. Book and slides: "Ten Nights in a Barroom" - $45
71. "Ten Nights in a Bar Room: Book" - $14
72. Radiopticon - $35
73. 20 slide set: St. Vincent De Paul - $5
74. 25 slides: Life of St. Theresa - $3
75. 6 slides of George Washington - $35
76. 30 religious slides: Lourdes - $3
77. Cardboard mounted slides - $1
78. Religious slides - $12
79. Beard "Eclipse" slide carrier - $27
80. 2 sets of 8 slides - "Babes in the Woods", "Jack the Giant Killer" - $130
81. 4 woodmounted slides - $60
82. 4 woodmounted slides - $85
83. Book - "Ghosts" - $20
84. McAllister dual wick lantern with microscope lens (didn't meet reserve)
85. 38 geology slides in metal box - $10
86. 44 pilgrim slides - $20
87. Slip slide - "Funny Face" - $150
88. Slip slide - "Good Night" - $140
89. Slip slide - "Cats and Mouse" - $30
90. Double slip slide - "Cauliflower Head" - $60
91. Slip slide - "Capers" - $35
92. Double slip slide - "Ratcatcher" - $125
93. Chromatrope - $325
94. Pair of registration slides - $125
95. Slip slide - "Stuck in the Turnstile" - $45
96. Beale painting - "Adieu" - $300
97. Kimac Lantern and case - $35
98. Double slip slide - "Man in Collar" - $12

CHRISTMAS ON LONG ISLAND

By Ralph Shape

In December I had the pleasure of having a night off work and staying on Long Island, New York. Ten miles away was Old Bethpage Village Restoration. I knew a member of the Magic Lantern Society did Christmas shows there and went to experience a nineteenth century Christmas.

An experience it was. These cold December days are called candlelight evenings. Lanterns are issued at the office and everyone carries one to light the way through the extensive grounds. There are singing concerts in the church, music in the schoolhouse, a Victorian Christmas tree in the store, cider around the bonfire, dancing, and finally, a magic lantern show.

Fitting in perfectly with the era, Henry Clark performs many shows nightly to a full house of wondering adults and children. Spending a few minutes explaining to the audience "what is a magic lantern," then performing his slide show, he keeps the audience entertained with all variety of slides including, of course, a snoring man eating rats. Many of the people were newcomers to the magic lantern but many were repeaters who come to see Henry perform every Christmas. After the show interest was high as people gathered around the lanterns with questions.

Henry is certainly doing his part to spread interest in the magic lantern and to preserve its history. If you are ever in the New York area in December check out Old Bethpage Village. It's an enchanting evening.

99. Dissolve set - "No Cross No Crown" - $20
100. Slide - "Cold Knight" - $12
101. EP German toy lantern and 6 slides in wood box - $85
102. 19 unbound misc. slides - $3
103. Wood slide box for 27 slides with key - $50
104. DeVry 35mm movie projector $25
105. 81 incredibly boring slides - $10
106. 5 Christmas slides - $45
107. Group of Napoleon slides - $35
108. "Roger and I" - 5 B&W slides - $17
109. "Christmas Goose" - 11 slides - $170
110. Beard "Eclipse" slide carrier - $45
111. 10 "Cain and Abel" slides (Beale) - $45
112. Chromatrope - $225
113. "Utopia" boxed set - $85
114. "Scrooge" boxed set - $10
115. 4 Beale patriotic slides - $25
116. Cinema lantern - small reel - $110
117. Set - McKinley slides (didn't meet reserve)
118. "The Kid on Vacation" slides (didn't meet reserve)
119. 6 slides "Where is My Boy Tonight?" (Beale) - $90
120. "Drunkard's Daughter" - 5 slides, 1 missing - $65
121. Boxed set "Sweep and Whitewasher" - $60
122. Slip slide "Fairy on Drum" - $65
123. Slip slide "Skating Birds" - $20
124. Chromatrope - $600
125. 20 35mm reproduced advertising slides - $40
126. 30 35mm reproduced advertising slides - $40
127. 17 35mm reproduced advertising and service slides - $30
128. 20 35mm advertising and service slides - reproduced - $55
129. "Welcome" slide - $75
130. "Good Night" slide - $50
131. "Interval" slide - $45
132. "Good Night Candle" slide - $60
133. 2 slides "God Save the Queen" - $40
134. 3 slides "Long Live the King" - $35
135. 10 colored patriotic slides - $50
136. Copper plate slides - Birds - $20
137. Copper plate slides - More birds - $25
138. Woodmounted "Good Night" slide - $110
139. Woodmounted "Welcome" slide - $85
140. Magna-vue projector - $30
141. "Merry Christmas" wood slide - $150
142. 15 Alaska slides (didn't meet reserve)
143. 3 slides - Lindberg - $12
144. 8 B&W "Love Scenes" - $14
145. 4 Victorian Interiors - $12
146. 12 Beale "Uncle Tom's Cabin" - $60
147. 43 religious slides with reading cards - $4
148. Metal slide chest - $35
149. Song set "Old Guitar and Old Refrain" - $50
150. 3 woodmounted slides - $25
151. "Napoleon's Dream" reproduction - $15

MY LIMELIGHT WAS A LEMON

By Henry Clark

Part Two

It may well be that I am misremembering my first encounter with Richard Balzer. It may be that I did not first meet him in the back of a shadowy bistro near the Marseille docks where he took time out from his work with the French Resistance to sell me a slip slide of a boy falling off a pig. It may well be that I simply wrote to him after seeing his magic lantern display at the Museum of Our National Heritage and he was gracious enough to write back. And, wonder of wonders, offer to sell me, at reasonable cost, some magic lantern slides.

After a few months of corresponding with Richard, I had more than doubled the number of slides available for my annual museum show. (I was now, personally, the owner of 42 magic lantern slides, not one of which was even remotely connected with the Civil War.) Not only that, I had acquired a new lantern.

The Benjamin Pike lantern owned by Old Bethpage Village, which I had been using to do the Village's annual December show for seven years, had its drawbacks. The main disadvantage was that, if I moved the lantern all the way to the back of the schoolroom where I did my shows, the image the lantern projected became so large the outer edges were lost and I found myself saying things like, "Who among us has not speculated about the part played in the siege of Vicksburg by Ulysses Grant's left nostril?"

The Pike lantern's lensing forced its placement in the middle of the room, which cut down on the available seating and put the lanternist perilously close to the room's wood burning stove. A theatrical hand gesture could easily bring hand and stovepipe into direct contact, with the result that the emotive power of some of the world's greatest poetry became decidedly diminished through line readings that ran, "The boy stood on the burning deck—OwOwOw! That things #@$*ing hot!"

continued page 10

Auction cont.

152. Dissolving set - reproduction "Waterfall" - $40
153. 4 advertising and service slides - $25
154. 4 advertising and service slides - $30
155. Slip slide "Tailor" - $20
156. 8 "Joy to the World" slides with words - $65
157. "Good Night Clown" double slip slide - $225
158. 4 colored "Shepherds" 1 Beale - $20
159. 3 Christmas slides - $25
160. 6 movie announcement slides - $125
161. 20 unbound lantern plates - $16
162. 5 oversized slides - $250
163. Magna Lite - $5
164. 6 B&W slides "Tipsy Geese" - $60
165. 5 coming attraction slides (didn't meet reserve)
166. 7 of 8 "Swanee River" Beale - $50
167. Slip slide "Tailor's Goose" - $45
168. 3 slides "We Three Kings" - $20
169. 3 Columbus slides - $15
170. Slip slide "Arab Smoker" - $75
171. "Holy City" some Beale - $95
172. "Erastus Plays the Kazoo" - $20
173. Chromatrope - $175
174. Newton Magic Lantern with effluvia - $175
175. Sheets of uncut slides (4 @ $20) $80
176. Partial sheets of uncut slides (12 @ $10) $120

My Limelight was a Lemon continued

There was also the matter of the Pike's illuminant. It did not have one. So each year, the curators of the museum would come up with new and exciting experimental light sources, most of which did not work, and some of which were downright dangerous. (The first time I ever saw the Pike, before I even knew what a magic lantern was, a curator had it on his office desk and was trying to project a slide using the light from the flame of a propane blowtorch. The experiment ended abruptly when he set fire to his Rolodex.)

One year I was asked to place a kerosene lamp, of the variety usually used to illuminate a Victorian parlor, inside the Pike. I questioned the wisdom of placing a tin lantern full of kerosene on a tall table next to a woodburning stove in a small room packed with 60 people with small children running around the table's legs, but since none of the curators had to be in the room with me during the shows, we decided to do it anyway. I did all of my shows that December with one hand on a chemical fire extinguisher, fighting the growing suspicion that Mrs. O'Leary's cow had been a lanternist.

I put my foot down the following year. I refused to ever again do another lantern show using a Molotov cocktail as an illuminant. The curators agreed, not for safety reasons but because the kerosene lamp had turned out to have all the projecting power of a dozen fireflies trapped in a mayonnaise jar. The curators then came up with the idea of hooking up two 6-volt lantern batteries in series and connecting them to a flashlight bulb. This actually worked reasonably well for the first show or two of the evening, but as the night progressed, it became possible to actually see the power in the batteries fading as the image on the wall got progressively dimmer. By the end of the evening I found myself saying things like, "Here we have a man swallowing rats. He's in bed, asleep, late at night, so all the lights are out. It's really quite amusing. Try to see it in your mind's eye."

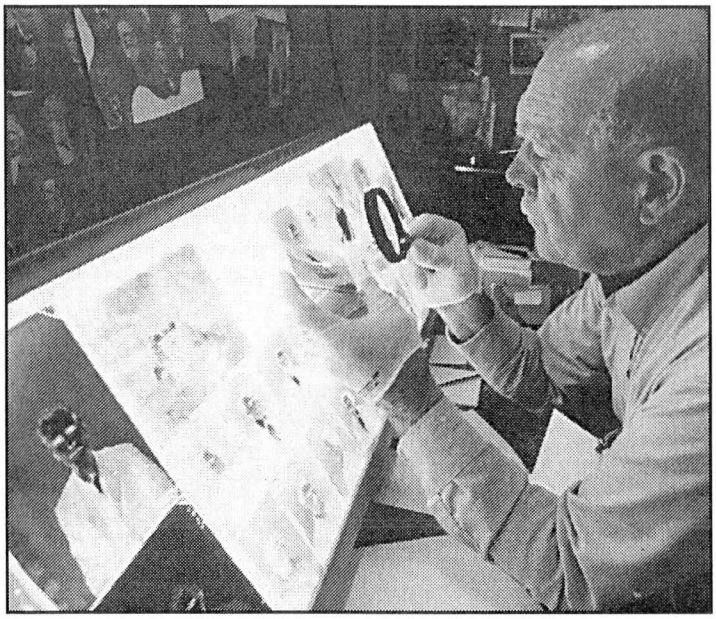
Things were going from bad to worse with the Benjamin Pike. Then, through Richard Balzer, I acquired a Marcy Sciopticon.

Next issue: Sciopticon Tales.

Answer to last issue's guess the weight of the pig: 814 pounds.

BOB ASKREN IN THE LIME LIGHT

The following article appeared in the December 28, 1996 edition of the Kansas City Star. It was written by Joe Popper.



A HARSH, LOST WORLD EMERGES FROM PHOTOS

About 10 years ago Robert Askern, a retired commercial photographer who lives in Liberty, was browsing through an antique shop when he saw a 19th century slide projector called a "magic lantern."

"It was an interesting gadget, so I bought it," he said recently. "But I didn't really know what it was." Nor could he know that the lantern soon would light his way toward a long, strenuous search through the forgotten past.

To begin with, though, he was simply intrigued by the old-time device. He learned that such lanterns, which were equipped with simple lenses and illuminated by kerosene or oil lamps, were used to project photos and other pictures from glass slides.

In the latter part of the 19th century they became a popular form of public entertainment, particularly in rural America, where photography still retained a mystical aura. "The traveling projectionists were master showmen," Askren said. "They projected onto clouds of smoke, so the pictures seemed to float in midair. They had hidden assistants shake their screens, so the images seemed to come alive."

The popularity of the shows led to a growing demand for new material. And by the 1870s glass slide companies were publishing many catalogs of fresh offerings.

It was while reading a reprint of just such a catalogue that Askren came upon the following: . . . from the negatives by Mr. J.T. Hicks, Liberty, MO (three slides, $1.00 each), entitled "The Grasshopper Wedding of 1874," "The Grasshopper Feast of 1874," " The Grasshopper Family" . . . The notice added that all proceeds from the slides would "benefit those suffering from the ravages of grasshoppers." The odd reference to "ravages" made no impression on Askren at the time.

"No," he said, "what jumped out at me were the words 'Liberty, Mo.' And 'J.T. Hicks.' Who was he?" I didn't know where to start looking.

Finding Links

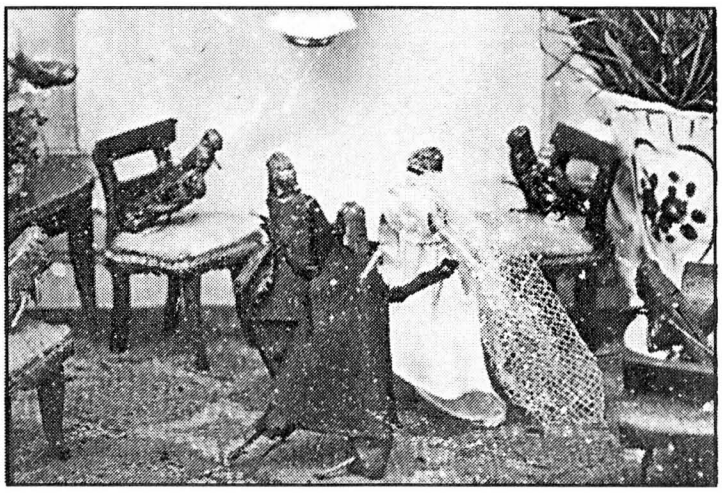
As it happened, a few days later Askren went for a routine eye examination by his friend Sam Chapman, a Liberty optometrist and an avid photographer. Their talk soon turned to pictures. And out of the blue Chapman began to reminisce about an old glass slide he had tried to make a print from years before. It was a quaint old thing, he said, a bunch of grasshoppers dressed up in human clothes, apparently for a wedding.

"My ears stood up," Askren later recalled. "He was talking about the very thing I'd just read." Chapman then added that the slide came from an elderly woman in town named Nadine Thompson, the great-niece of a man named J.T. Hicks. "By then I could hardly believe it," Askren said. Unfortunately, Askren was told, Nadine Thompson had become deaf, cranky and unreceptive to visitors.

He did however, obtain the names of a few other people possibly related to Hicks. None was in Liberty, though.

. And so Askren began phoning all over the country, chasing leads. After more than a year of frustrating work, he finally tracked down a woman in Maryland named Mary Prehn, who, as it turned out, was Nadine Thompson's niece. "Oh, yes," Prehn said on the phone, "we have quite a few of J.T. Hicks' pictures here, perhaps 300." Among them, she added, were the original grasshopper slides. Askren was thrilled because those particular pictures

continued page 10



This is a part of the original image used to make lantern slides.

had taken on new significance for him. He had combed through old county archives and had discovered what they were about. "The grasshoppers are doing us much injury," wrote one Clay County farmer in 1875.

Askren learned that 1874 and 1875 were the years when hundreds of millions of grasshoppers billowed east from Colorado, eating all in their way, settling so densely they obscured the ground. The pictures had been significant clues to the past. It was a lesson Askren would not forget.

Private Grief

In 1992, Mary Prehn came to Liberty to visit her aunt. She brought the grasshopper slides and some welcome news. Her aunt, she said, would be most happy to meet Askren. "And when we met" Askren said, "Nadine Thompson was absolutely charming." She told him that J.T. (Jacob Thornton) Hicks had run a studio on the north side of Liberty's old town square, that he had been the first photographer in the region and that he had taken pictures of everyone in town and the surrounding region.

She recalled, too, that he once owned a second gallery in Richmond, to the east in Ray County. She had heard it said that Hicks had been engaged to a woman in Richmond, but something had happened. She didn't know what it was, but it changed his life forever. He never talked about it. Hicks died in 1924, still unmarried. He was 83. His secret seemingly died with him.

After Nadine Thompson's death several years ago, however, a few small items that once belonged to Hicks were found in her attic. Among them was a calling-card case made of brass and fine Morocco leather. Askren examined it carefully, and inside he found about a dozen small visiting cards. All were handwritten, dated in the 1860s and '70s, and all were from the same woman. "Florence's compliments to Mr. Hicks and would be pleased to accompany him at 5 o'clock July 16th, read one. On others, similar in content, the name was signed "Florence Word."

Knowing that Hicks had kept the cards close to him for almost 50 years, Askren began to hunt through Ray County history, seeking the woman's name or some other clue. He found both:

He learned that on June 1, 1878, a "cyclone" struck Richmond and that a young woman named Florence Word was injured very seriously. She died the next day. On the following day she was buried, and according to later newspaper accounts, J.T. Hicks left Richmond that same day. "He never went back," Askren said. "And we have no idea what work he left behind."

Weathered Faces

Shortly before her own death, Nadine Thompson, along with her niece, donated the 300 surviving Hicks plates to the Clay County Museum. They are probably all that remain of the many thousands of pictures the pioneering photographer took in his long career.

Askren has since learned that until the 1930s or '40s, there were hundreds, perhaps thousands, of additional plates stored in a private garage in Liberty. But as they toppled from shelves or fell from decaying boxes, they were driven over and crushed. All were lost.

The existing plates now are stored in the county archives. In the basement there Askren has rigged a small workroom, where he spends hours each week silently studying the old pictures, painstakingly restoring them and trying to identify the portraits. Thus far he has identified 57. On a light table he has laid scores of photos, still unidentified. "Look at all those faces," he said. "Not a smile among them. Their clothes are coarse, the hair uncared-for, their faces and hands weathered and aged even among the young. They clearly led rough, hard lives."

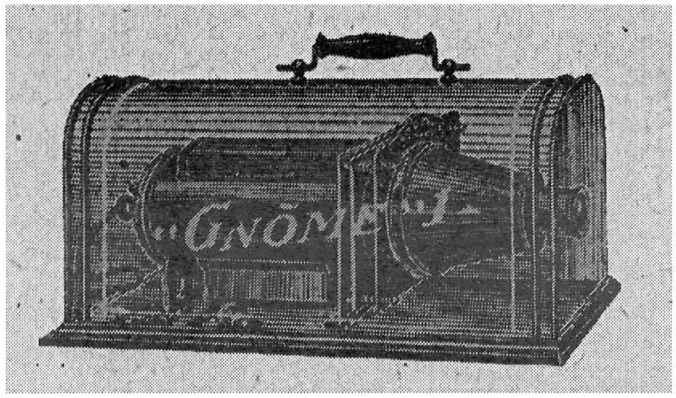
He stepped back and stared at the massed photos. "We'll never identify most of them," he said. "But what Hicks really left behind is the portrait of a lost world."

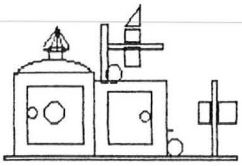
Bob's Comments

This article generated a very nice response. It appeared Saturday morning and my first call was at 7:30 a.m. and the calls continued all through the day, some lasting 45 minutes. Over a number of days I received over 20 calls and a half dozen letters.

Some were about glass negatives, about Mr. Hicks (two relatives of Hicks' called), and some were about magic lanterns. One man was on his way to Florida, he will call when he returns in May or June. We are to have lunch in Overland Park, Kansas and look and talk about magic lanterns and slides.

Fox TV Network called to do a live interview on magic lanterns but I was to be out of state at the time they were to be here.





Omega
8 Magnolia Gardens
Bel Royal, St Lawrence
JERSEY C.I. JE3 1JW
tel +44 01534 25114

DAMER'S RESEARCH

Following your request for material for the ***"Gazette"***, I enclose a couple of items which may be of interest. The trouble is that my researche's at present relate to the use of the lantern in Jersey and very little is directly interesting to the USA. I am including panoramas in my search as they appear to have been a major traveling entertainment, mainly providing the equivalent of the documentary film. I have also found reports on other panoramas which show the USA and I can send this information if you think it would be interesting.

The following items were taken from the ***"Jersey Times"*** of 1856:

Tuesday, 22nd January

Announcement of Grand Panorama of American Slavery to be presented in Cornwall's Riding School, Gloucester Street, by Mr. Henry "Box Brown," a slave who escaped from slavery in a box. See photocopy.

Monday, 28th January

By permission of Sir Thomas Le Breton, Kent, Bailiff.
Monday, January 28, 1856
and following nights,
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
and Friday
Gloucester Street

Mr. Henry "Box Brown", The celebrated American Fugitive Slave, begs most respectfully to inform the nobility, Gentry, and Inhabitants of the Island of Jersey, that he will exhibit his original GRAND PANORAMA of American Slavery.

The first that has ever appeared before the public, and the only one of the kind now in existence, it has been witnessed by TWO MILLION people in a very brief period of time who have beheld the spectacle with combined feelings of interest and admiration. It contains ONE HUNDRED MAGNIFICENT VIEWS.

The scenes will be described by Mr. Henry "Box Brown."

Programme

ILLUSTRATED VIEWS of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN, PAINTED ON 60,000 SQUARE FEET OF CANVAS

Part I

—The Nubian Family
—Seizure of the Slaves
—Religious Sacrifice
—Interior of a Slave Mart
—Gorgeous Scenery in the West Indian Islands
—Nubian Family at Auction
—The Grand Fourth of July Celebration!!
—Separation after the Sale of Slaves
—Modes of Confinement and Punishment
—Brand and Scourge
—Interior of Charleston Work House.

Part II

—Sunday among the Slave Population
—Monday Morning, with Sugar Plantations and Mill
—Woman at Work
—Cotton Plantation
—View of the Lake of the Dismal Swamp
—Nubians Escaping by Night—Ellen Croft's Escaping
—The Whipping Posts and Gallows at Richmond, Virginia
—View of Richmond, Virginia: Henry Box Brown, Escaping
—View of the Natural Ridge and Jefferson's Rock
—City of Washington, D.C.
—Washington's Tomb at Mount Vernon
—Fairmont Water Works
—H. Box Brown Released in Philadelphia
—Distant View of the City of Philadelphia
—Burning Alive
—Promise of Freedom
—Grand Industrial Palace
—West Indian Emancipation
—Grand Tableaux
—Universal Emancipation.

Damer's research continued

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS
(From the Manchester Guardian)

PANORAMA OF SLAVERY—There is now exhibiting at the Merchant's Institution, a panorama of "Mirror of American Slavery," painted by three artists of Boston, United States. The representation illustrate the condition of Slaves in America, their forced march to the coast, the horrors of the passage, their disembarkation and sale by public auction, the march of chain gangs, the modes of confinement and punishment of slaves, their conditions upon plantations, and plans of escape adopted by some fugitive slaves, who have since become well-known from their subsequent connection with anti-slavery societies. But what gives most interest to the panorama is the circumstance that the exhibitor, Henry Box Brown, himself escaped from slavery, packed in a box at Richmond, Virginia, and was thus sent as "luggage" to Philadelphia, where he was released from his confinement. The panorama includes views of Richmond, Philadelphia, and Washington, with its slave auction. Brown describes the views and introduces several plantation melodies, &c. It is probable that the panorama will not remain in Manchester beyond to-morrow (Thursday) and those friends of the anti-slavery movement and others who may desire to see it, and its exhibitor, should loose (sic) no time.

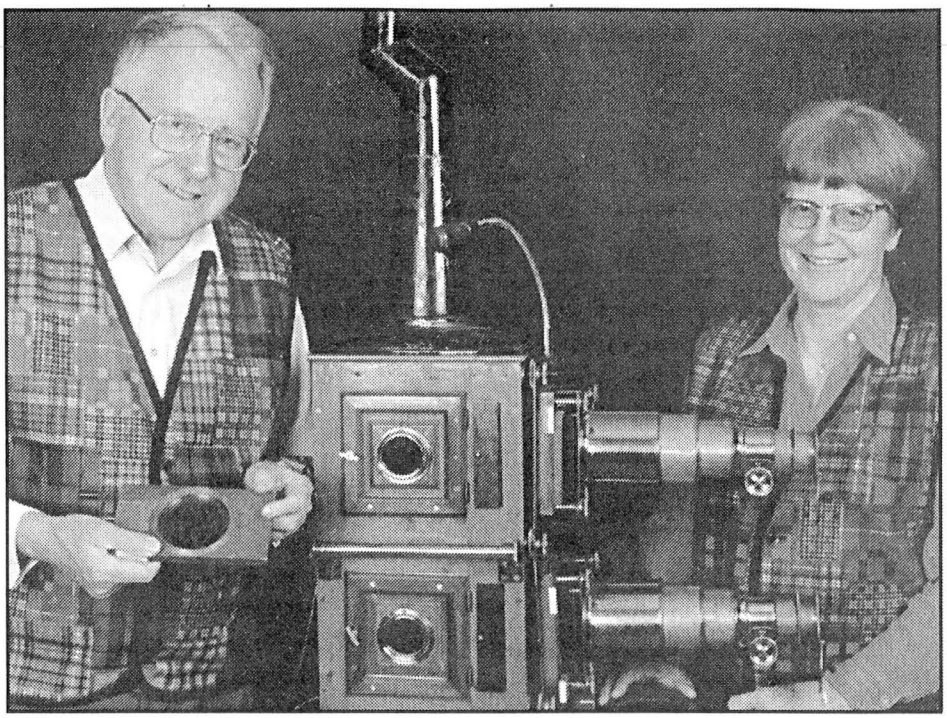
In addition to this, Mr. Brown has received numerous and flattering Testimonials in all parts of the Country.

Mr. Brown will give a SONG, descriptive of his escape, and exhibit the IDENTICAL BOX in which he made his escape.

This is Mr. Brown's first visit to Jersey.

ADMISSION:—Dress Circle, 2s; Slide Boxes, 1s; Pit, 6d; each person. Tickets may be had of MR. METIVIER, Bookseller, Stationer, &c., 56, Kingstreet or at the Door. The Panorama will open each evening at half-past

continued page 15

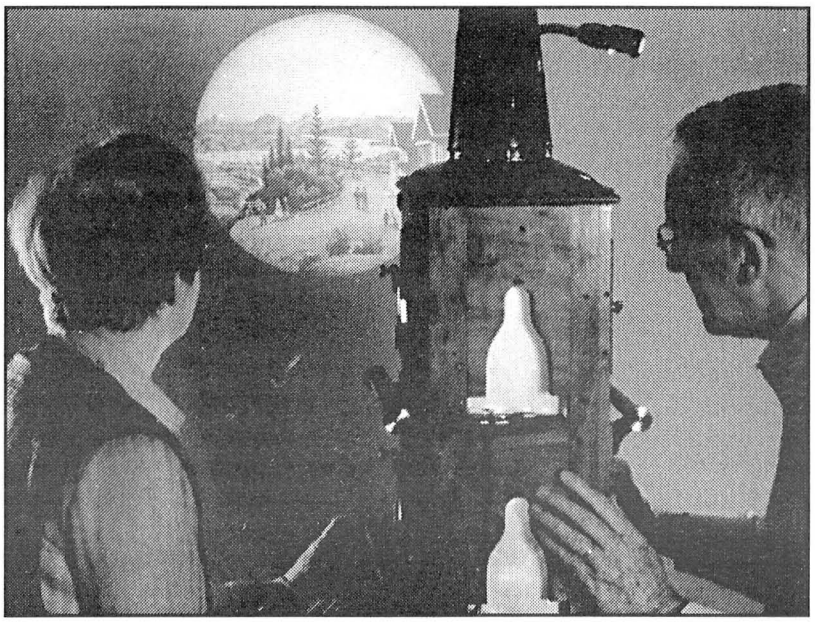


SWISS MEMBERS' PICTURES APPRECIATED

All who attended the San Diego Convention were charmed by our members from Zurich, Switzerland, Gerhard and Rachel Honegger. Some of us were even fortunate to receive a visit from them during their 30 day west coast tour following the convention.

When they arrived home we received a thank you note and these pictures.

Do others of you that do shows, have a picture(s) you can send us? It would be a nice addition to future issues.



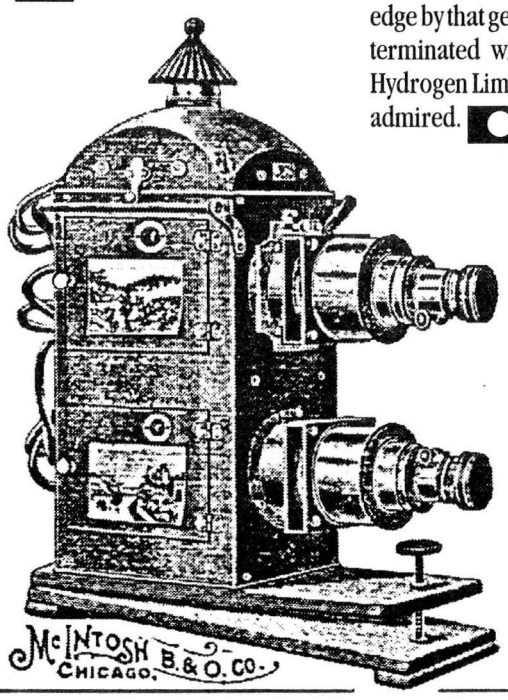
Six o'clock; to commence at half-past Seven precisely. Carriages to be in attendance at half-past nine.

A band will be in Attendance each Evening.

N.B..—Mr. Cornwall will give his Riding Lessons as usual during the stay of the PANORAMA.

Friday, 1st February

The Panorama now being exhibited at Mr. Cornwall's circus, illustrates the blighting curse of slavery which hangs over "the freeest possible Republic," has been very attractive during the week. The pictures are interesting and highly effective, and the matter and the manner of the exhibitor, M.H. Box Brown—himself an escaped slave—do full justice to his painting, and to his cause which that and his accompanying lecture are intended, and are so highly calculated to champion. We must not omit to mention that Mr. Brown shows the audience the identical box in which he effected his deliverance from the worse-than-death thralldom of his Owners, and that he relates that, "in the North of England, to convince a skeptic, who doubted his living in that box 37 hours, he remained in it seven hours, and was thus sent by rail from one town to another."



JERSEY TIMES AND BRITISH PRESS 1863

Wednesday, 30th December
PRINCE OF WALES' ASSEMBLY ROOMS

In behalf of the Sunday-school formerly of St. Jude's a lecture, descriptive of "***Uncle Tom's Cabin***", was delivered last night by the Rev. C.H. Bateman, in the spacious room which Mr. Moss has recently erected in Minden-street, at the back of the Cattle-market. Allowance being made for the inclement weather, the attendance may fairly be described an numerous, the reserved seats in particular being occupied by many ladies and gentlemen. The children of the school (boys and girls) occupied the gallery, and sang a selection of hymns during the evening. Mr. Bateman's lecture comprised the principal scenes recorded in the tale, which were rendered in a pleasing manner, with considerable graphic power. Its value was much enhanced by the exhibition of a series of beautiful Dissolving Views. At the close of the lecture, Mr. Bateman said he thought the company were much indebted to Mr. Carrel for his kindness, and perseverance, with the Dissolving Views (applause). Mr. D. Hamon, the superintendent of schools, then moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Bateman, which was carried with acclamation and courteously acknowledge by that gentleman. The proceedings were terminated with the exhibition of the Oxy-Hydrogen Lime Light. Its brilliance was greatly admired.

Q&A

Q&A is a forum for members of the MLS*USA/CAN to share questions & expertise. Send your comments, queries, & responses to the Gazette now.

Q We have had several requests for where to buy binding tape. For years we have bought it (usually delivered C.O.D. through U.P.S.) from:

P&G Products, Inc.
P.O. Box 1038
Blue Jay, CO 92317
1(800) 367-8847

Ask for #5420, Photo Tape, Black. It is self-adhesive, 1/2" x 60 yds. When we first started buying it, it was $7.00 a roll but is now up to $10.00.

Does anyone have a better (cheaper) source to share?

Q Louise Barrows from Clay Springs, Arizona, has a L.J. Marcy lantern patented Ap. 19 - Aug. 11, 1868 - July 6, 1869. She wants information on it. Bob Bishop's response:

A When Geshner separated the petroleum crude and brought forth the lighter oils, it changed the world. Not only for all the lamps of China but also in every other society and in particular the medium of the magic lantern.

The popular phantasmagoria lantern of the past, with Arand and illumination, the so called 'solar light,' or possibly the "lime light" (all of which had been adapted to fit various makes of lanterns) became passé. The transformation for lanterns occurred in the 1870s. Many attempts were made to supply the old style lanterns with new lamps which could utilize the new volatile product, paraffin oil, but with little success.

continued page 16

Q and A continued

The first lantern to fully utilize the new source effectively was the L.J. Marcy lantern. (My own Marcy has an April 28 - Aug. 11, 1868 patent and a third date shows Pat. Dec. 8, 1868.) Built into the L.J. Marcy lantern was a special combustion chamber. The illumination source was a two-wick burner (flat instead of round), along with a chimney which produced a 'proper draught' to ensure a bright smokeless light. (Although not mentioned in any of the sources for this article, there was, at least in my Marcy an added register which contained a square of heat resistant glass in order to protect the condensing lenses from the high heat produced by the two-wick burner.) The optical system was also improved by adopting a double condenser consisting of two plano/convex photographic portrait lenses.[1]

The L.J. Marcy lantern invented and patented by Lorenz-James Marcy, then of Northport, Rhode Island, has been adopted as this society's logo and properly so. It is a distinctive American product which has been widely copied about the world.[2]

Now for any reader desiring more explicit information, I refer them to the Magic Lantern Bulletin, (original name of this Society's publication), Vol. 1, #VIII, June 1986. In that issue is an informative, lengthy article by Alan Kattelle about the Marcy Sciopticon and the medium as it existed at that time. His fact-filled article first appeared in The New England Journal of Photographic History, March/April 1983, issue #22.

[1] Magic Lantern Journal, Vol. #2, Feb. 1979 (English Soc. Pub.)
John & William Barnes Catalogue. 1970
[2] Magic Lantern Gazette, Vol. 1, #2, Winter 1989

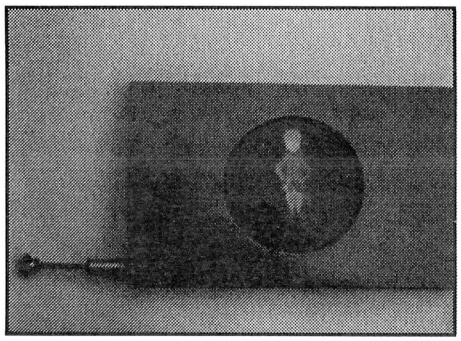
Q A Those of you who attended the 1996 Convention know that the Hall's have been blessed with more than their share of "incredibly boring slides." Since we can't sell them, the best thing is to take them apart (by soaking them in water overnight) and use them for cover glass. The problem is how to remove the emulsion from a photo of an unidentified hill someone took on vacation 100 years ago.

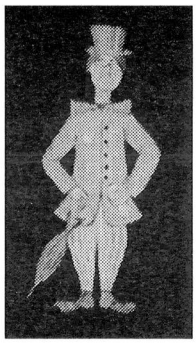
Sue found this in George L. Sinclair's, ***M.D.'s Dry Plate Making for Amateurs, 1886.***

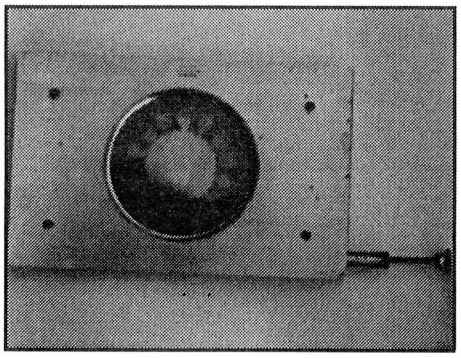
To clean the old negatives, dissolve several ounces of common washing soda in two or three gallons of hot water. In this solution place the negatives and leave them, for say, twenty-four hours. At the end of that time you will probably find many of the films have disappeared. Those which still adhere to the glass can be very easily removed by using an old toothbrush as a rubber. After the glasses are denuded of their old films, put them into hot water, to which add a small quantity of hydrochloric acid; let them soak for an hour then transfer them to pure hot water for another hour, after which they will be clean and may be reared up on end to drain and dry.

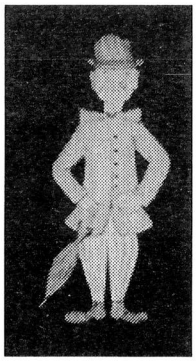
Sue didn't get as far as the hydrochloric acid but found that the soda solution didn't "denude" the slides as well as the dishwasher (her usual method). Even after two runs through the dishwasher she found most slides still needed to be scrubbed with a pot scrubber to remove all the emulsion. Who has a really effective (easy) way to do this?

Q A Have you seen one like it?









This lantern slide, made by "Newton, 3 Fleet St. London," is one I would like to know more about. It measures 7" x 4 1/2" and has a brass face about 1/16" thick mounted on polished mahogany.

The unique thing about the slide is that the fourteen faces that rotate into position on the man's body are activated by a plunger mechanism on the side— one push, one new face.

Newton of course was one of the largest manufacturers of lantern equipment and slides in England. They were located on Fleet Street from 1858 until 1913 when they moved to Covent Garden on King Street.

We found the slide last year resting with an antique dealer in London. It is resting no longer.

Don Curan, Navato, California.

NEWS FROM THE NORTHWEST CORNER

By Sue Hall

Nine members of the Northwest Corner met on Sunday, January 26, at the home of Marvin and Diane Nauman, Gig Harbor, Washington. Marvin briefly belonged to the U.S. and Canada Magic Lantern Society but dropped his membership to pursue his real interest in antique movie machines and films.

We received a very informative tour of Marvin's extensive collection of film projectors, cameras, and magic lanterns. A few of these items are for sale. His name and address are listed in the classified section of this issue.

After a great potluck luncheon we were entertained with Buster Keaton films and some of Marvin's coming attraction slides. Bob Hall, Larry Cederblom, Harvey Becker, and John Potter took turns cranking the handle of Marvin's 1916 cinomatograph, cheered on by Alice, Joe, Sharon Koch, Sue Hall, and Betty Pottter.

It took Marvin over five years to fully restore his projector to its original style and condition. His story of where, how, and from whom he got the different parts he needed is quite interesting and sounds familiar to many of us who have undertaken similar projects with our lanterns.

During the business/show and tell portion of the meeting, dates and places were decided on for a spring and summer meeting—June 1 at Sharon Koch's, August 3 at the Hall's, and October 19 at Larry Cederblom's. This opportunity to meet throughout the year with other collectors is one of the best things we do. We encourage others to try to hold periodic meetings like those in the northwest and northeast portion of our country.

BADGER MOVING PICTURE OUTFIT

Photographic Canadiena, Vol. 14, No.5, March/April 1989

By Robert G. Wilson

The Badger Stereopticon and Picture Machine Co. of La Crosse, Wisconsin sold a wide range of educational lantern slides and lantern slide projectors. When moving pictures were developed, Badger moved with the times and introduced their "Moving Picture Outfit," as illustrated by a page from their catalog on page 18.

The light source in this outfit is the standard Badger Lantern Slide projector, complete with their "improved" arc lamp. This projector could be removed from the tripod base and used separately to project lantern slides.

During projection, the film was handled in the "Moving Picture mechanism" mounted on the tripod in front of the projector. There were two square boxes to hold the film reels. In the housing between the film boxes was a hand crank to advance the film. Finally, on the front of the mechanism was a rotary disc shutter.

This Moving Picture outfit, complete with 110 volt rheostat and special tripod, cost $180.00 when this catalog was published. Unfortunately, it is not dated, but would likely have been published around 1910.

continued page 18

JOHN W. RIPLEY

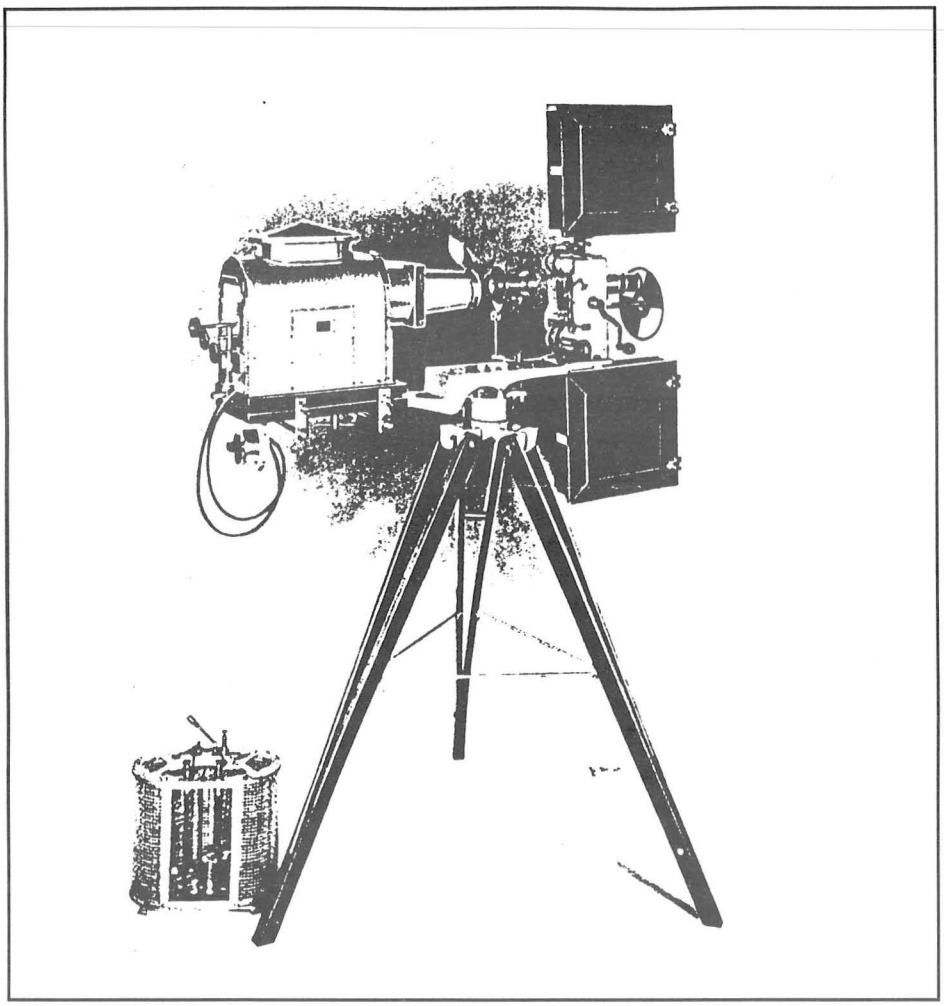
By. R.O. Bishop Sr.

John W. Ripley, unlike Dorothy and Toto, will not be able to return to his beloved Kansas. But John, the only Honorary member of MLS*USA/CAN, will be remembered for his services to Topeka, Shawnee County and indeed the State of Kansas. Ripley passed away December 1, 1996 at the age of 101.

Ripley and I met but once and talked by phone a few times over the years. He sold me some illustrated song slides, gifted me others, and even rented some to the Old Projectionist. (And I was years late on my end of the bargain.) His surprise to find me at his front door the time I visited was very evident. My offer to do a show for the Shawnee County Historical Society was out of the question. "These things take time," he told me.

But we corresponded over the years, admitably more words from me than from him. He stopped responding after August of 1992. I supposed that at age 97 and with medical problems it was difficult to keep up with all the correspondence that came his way. I would like to think that was the reason.

continued page 18



Moving Picture Outfit

B113 Badger lantern with 2 7/16" diameter projection lens and "Improved" arc lamp, $53.00
B151 Double 110 volt rheostat with guard adjustable from 5 to 35 amperes, $17.00
M800 Moving Picture mechanism with magazine, $90.00
M832 Moving Picture tripod with carriage for lamp house and switch, $20.00
BM10 Moving Picture outfit complete as above, Total $180.00

He accepted with grace all the honors bestowed on him by the city of Topeka, the State of Kansas, and the Shawnee County Historical Society. A private man, but still he found it in himself to let interviewers know about the sub rosa aspects of his life, such as when he and a young friend "blew up an apple tree in Rev. John Knox's orchard with a homemade pipe bomb."[1]

He told reporters that in 1914 he "was invited not to return" to the Colorado Prep School. I suppose it may have tickled him to let them know of the event at the time when Washburn University awarded him an honorary degree as a Doctor of Letters.[2]

John counted his decades old infatuation with illustrated song slides as one of the most rewarding experiences of his life. For him, saving the images and songs of the Gas Light Era was worthwhile for its own sake. Exposed to the colorful imagery of nickelodeons as a young boy in Topeka, he evidently got much too close to a magic lantern. In the early "dirty thirties" he came across a slide or two and the long dormant bite of the lantern bug revived.

Wanting more slides he advertised in both Billboard and Variety (theatrical publications). Sometime later an antique dealer by the name of Jim Mascutti contacted Ripley and informed him that he had just come into possession of a huge collection of the illustrated song slides which were found in a theatrical warehouse. Mascutti was anxious and eager to deal.

Ripley is quoted as saying, "We dickered on a price for two days and I made an offer per slide. (I have heard elsewhere that John offered to pay $1.00 per slide.) Well Jim Mascutti showed up a few days later in an overloaded station wagon which contained some 600 sets of illustrated song slides. (Each set probably had 12 to 16 slides for a possible total of 7,200 to 9,600 slides. Obviously $1.00 a slide was out of the question. After all, a dollar was much dearer in the early thirties than it is today.) Ripley finally paid $2.00 per set for the predecessor of the "bouncing ball" of movie fame.[3]

Finally, there was the instance of the antique chair of Mrs. Alice Hughes Merideth, a long time friend of Ripley. Mrs. Merideth of Ft. Myer, Florida had learned that a chair which had belonged to her grandfather had inadvertently ended up in a southern California museum. Her grandfather's home had been restored by new owners (also friends of Mrs. Merideth), and Mrs. Merideth desired the new owners to have the chair since it was an old family heirloom.

However, the western museum stated the chair could only be given to another museum, not to a private party. The distraught lady appealed to Ripley for help. According to the Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletin, 1985, Ripley, without consulting officers of the Society, organized the Museum of Shawnee County Historical Society. (Now comes sup-

position.) The bogus letterhead must have looked very authentic for the much longed for chair arrived some weeks later and was immediately forwarded back to its original home where the new owners gave it a place of honor.

For all his awards and achievements, and I respect him in relation to them all, the incidents cited in this article are the ones which delineate him to me as a very human figure. I believe they must have been very special to him also, since he enjoyed sharing them. He was a very special person who never took himself too seriously.

But I must say I am very glad I never had to play poker or dicker with Mr. Ripley. It is well that he was an honest straightforward citizen else there would be very few unsold bridges in Shawnee County, Kansas. Besides, I sort of like thinking of him as a Kansan Don Quixote, The Man of Topeka, tilting at bureaucratic windmills and giving succor to helpless widows and this is good enough for—The Old Projectionist.

[1] Topeka Capital Journal, Feb. 2, 1995
[2] Topeka Capital Journal, Jan Hall, "Witness to the Times"
[3] The Wall St. Journal, May 26, 1987

KEMP NIVER

By Ralph Shape

Kemp R. Niver, former member of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada, has died. He was a cinematographer, film historian, author and was so respected in the film industry that he was awarded a special Oscar. Kemp died October 15 in Los Angeles at the age of 84.

Born in Hollywood, Kemp spent most of his life in the Los Angeles area. Son of a Los Angeles County Sheriff, he joined the Navy in 1928 and worked in the fledgling naval aviation field. Following that tour he worked as a detective. He worked for Howard Hughes at RKO Studios, was an investigator for the Los Angeles County District Attorney, a homicide detective in the Los Angeles Police Department, and was head of security of Universal Studios. When World War II started he was given a commission and served as Executive Officer aboard the USS Pinola. Following the war, by now a veteran cameraman he worked for a while as a traveling photographer for President Eisenhower. In the early 1950s he was hired by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to do his most famous work, restoring the paper prints in the Library of Congress back into film.

Motion picture copyright law was enacted in 1912. Until that time, producers of motion pictures had no way to protect their pictures against duplication. They used the existing law covering still pictures. In 1894 Thomas Edison's assistant, William Dickson, made a paper print of a moving picture titled "Record of a Sneeze" and sent it to the Library of Congress hoping for protection under the still pictures act. That began the practice that was used for nearly 20 years.

Movie makers sent more than 5,000 paper prints made from the original negatives to the Library of Congress during that period. These paper prints were positive prints of each film frame on a continuous roll. The prints were on nitrocellulose base and put on bromide paper. That was what saved them for the future.

These paper prints, rolls of positive photographs that looked like movies but couldn't be projected, lay in the basement of the Library of Congress until the mid 1930s. Their discovery gained in importance as a historical record.

In the 1940s an inventory was begun. Hollywood's Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences found money and interest to try to copy them back to film. They also found Kemp Niver, by now a respected cinematographer with his own photography studio in Hollywood. For 15 years Kemp copied the paper rolls frame by frame to restore them to projectable films. It's estimated that he resorted two million feet of film. He put together a machine at his studio made out of an enlarging stand, the insides of an 1898 motion picture camera, a lens adapter, non-distortion glass, gears and axles from a military surplus bombsight, and photographed 3,600 salvageable movies onto 16mm film. None of the films date before 1894 as, apparently, none exist.

During this project, the Academy, realizing the importance and expertise of his work, awarded him with a special Oscar in 1954. He was very proud of his Oscar knowing it was awarded to him as a craftsman. The industry considered him to be one of the foremost experts on film restoration.

Author can be included as one of Kemp Niver's achievements. He wrote 11 books including: ***Motion Pictures from the Library of Congress*** **Paper Print Collection, 1894-1912;** ***The First Twenty Years***, A Segment of Film History; Biograph Bulletins, 1896-1908; and ***D. W. Griffith***; His Biograph Films in Perspective.

Kemp shared his knowledge by teaching film history at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Being a member of the Magic Lantern Society fit in with his interests in film history. Kemp rode cross country to our convention in Boston in 1987 with fellow Naval Officer and Society founder Joe Koch.

One of the films restored by Kemp was one made by George Melies who made over 1,500 films. ***The Magic Lantern***, 315 feet long and made in 1903, is about a toy shop where the toys come to life. As the toys dance, moving images are projected onto a back wall through a magic lantern. Melies used double exposure and editing to achieve smoothness. All of the dancers in the film were from the Follies Bergere. The Magic Lantern Society members were privileged to see this film at the convention in San Diego. It was presented by Sandra Joy Lee, curator of the School of Cinema and Television at UCLA. The machine used by Kemp to convert film was donated to the UCLA film archives. His collection of film references periodicals and documents has gone to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Library.

Information for this article has been gathered from the Los Angeles Times; Mr. Michael Friend, Director, Motion Picture Academy Film Archives, and Dr. Herbert Farmer, UCLA School of Cinema and Television.

BITS AND PIECES

- An excellent article on George Eastman can be found in The National Geographic Magazine, September 1954. Lots of these issues are around. It is entitled, "Eastman of Rochester: Photographic Pioneer." Although it does not mention magic lanterns, it is an interesting account of his contributions to photography and includes a section on wet plate versus dry plate process. George invented a machine to apply the sensitized gelatin by a roller, leading to a much easier way to mass-produce lantern slides.

- Congratulations to our founding father and mother, Joe and Alice Koch. Their 54th wedding anniversary was December 2, 1996. Joe and Alice started ***The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada*** in 1979 with 29 members.

- Robert G. Wilson writes that he recently saw a movie "Jude" (1996 U.K.) based upon the Thomas Hardy novel ***Jude the Obscure***. In it was a short, but nice piece of a magic lantern show, showing several slides, including the slide of the rat going into the sleeping man's mouth.

- To date we have heard from the following members who will be attending The Magic Lantern Society's convention in London in April: Bob and Sue Hall, Ralph and Judy Shape, Don and Mike Curan, Homer and Betty Peabody, Terry Borton, Linde McNeel, and Jack Judson.

CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

Many projection bulbs. Call or write for sizes and prices. Marvin Nauman, High Sierra Productions, 7220 40th St. N.W., Gig Harbor, WA 98335, (206) 265-6800.

For Sale

The following books are available from George Hall: ***When Movies Began***, $5.00; ***Dr. Paris's Thaumatrope***, $6.00; ***Victorian Film Catalogues***, $8.00; ***The Kinora***, $8.00; ***True History of the Ghost***, $11.00; ***Muybridge***, $8.00; and ***Mélies***, $8.00. To receive a brochure outlining the contents of each, send a SASE to George at P.O. Box 64246, Tucson, AZ 85728. You may also send an order to him at this address or

FAX (01) 81-675-7022,
e-mail S-herbert@easynet.co.uk.

Wanted

Commercial grade stereopticon devices with dissolve, pre-1919 preferred, and sets of illustrated song slides. Jim Jenks, 940 S. Park, Kalamazoo, MI 49001.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Members have been generous in their contributions for the Gazette and we already have a number of articles for our next issue. Not enough, however! Whatever you're interested in, other members will be too. We are particularly seeking any McAllister information you have—lanterns, slides, studio, or the man himself. This will be a feature of our next issue. Also to be covered will be the Magic Lantern Society's London convention.

NOTE TO MEMBERS

From Bob and Sue Hall

This is our first attempt at editing a newsletter. We are grateful for the help of friend, Sandy Young, for word-processing, and to Larry Cederblom for format, design, and graphics. The Halls are entirely responsible for choice of the contents and look forward to your suggestions, corrections, or general comments. Criticisms, however, will only be accepted if forwarded in the box below.

PATENT DATES AND CORRESPONDING NUMBERS FOR THE 1ST U.S. PATENT IN JANUARY OF THAT YEAR

Thanks to Larry Cederblom and the ***Collectibles Show*** on the FX network, for this information.

1850	6,981
1855	12,601
1860	25,279
1865	48,969
1870	98,471
1875	158,350
1880	232,978
1885	310,163
1890	418,665
1895	531,619
1900	640,167
1905	778,834
1910	945,010
1915	1,128,212
1920	1,326,899
1925	1,521,590
1930	1,742,181
1935	1,985,878
1940	2,185,170
1945	2,366,154
1950	2,492,944
1955	2,698,434
1960	2,919,434
1965	3,163,865
1970	3,487,470
1975	3,858,241